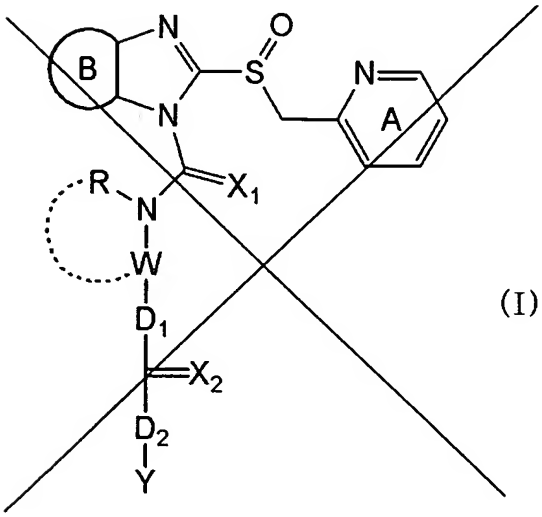
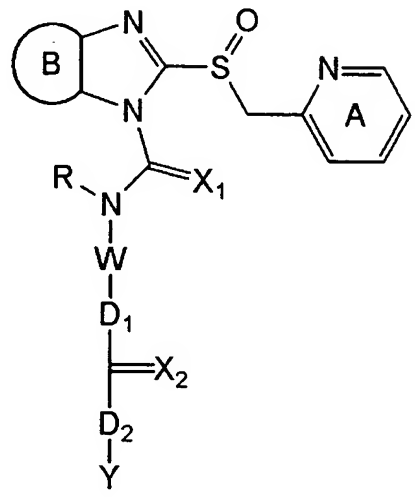
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An imidazole compound represented by the formula (I):



(I)



(I)

wherein

ring A is a pyridine ring optionally having substituents selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group, and

(2) C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally substituted by substituent(s) selected from halogen atom(s) and C_{1-6} alkoxy group,

ring B is a benzene ring optionally having substituents selected from

C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally substituted by halogen atom(s),

X_1 and X_2

are each an oxygen atom or a sulfur atom,

W is a C_{1-6} alkylene group optionally having substituents selected from C_{1-6} alkyl-carbonyloxy and ethoxycarbonyloxy or a divalent group represented by the formula:

$$--W_1--Z--W_2--$$

wherein W_1 and W_2 are each a C_{1-6} alkylene group or a bond, Z is C_{6-14} arene, an

oxygen atom, SO_n wherein n is 0, 1 or 2, or >N-E wherein E is a hydrogen atom, a lower alkanoyl group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group, an aralkyloxycarbonyl group, a thiocarbamoyl group, a lower alkylsulfinyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a sulfamoyl group, a mono-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, a di-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfinyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, an arylcarbonyl group or a carbamoyl group, and when Z is an oxygen atom, SO_n or >N-E, W_1 and W_2 are each C_{1-6} alkylene group ,

R is a group selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group optionally substituted by C_{1-6} alkyl-carbonyloxy,

(2) C_{3-10} cycloalkyl group, and

(3) C_{6-14} aryl group optionally substituted by a group represented by -CO–NR^2R^3 (wherein R^2 and R^3 are each C_{1-6} alkyl group),

~~R and W~~

~~may be bonded to each other,~~

D_1 is an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom or $>NR_1$,

D_2

is a bond, an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom or $>NR_1$ wherein each R_1 is independently C_{1-6} alkyl group[[,]], and

Y is

a group selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from C_{1-6} alkoxy group, ethoxycarbonyloxy group, C_{6-14} aryl group and a group represented by –NR^2R^3 (wherein R^2 and R^3 are each C_{1-6} alkyl group),

(2) C_{3-10} cycloalkyl group,

(3) C_{6-14} aryl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from (i) halogen atom and (ii) C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally having halogen atom(s), and

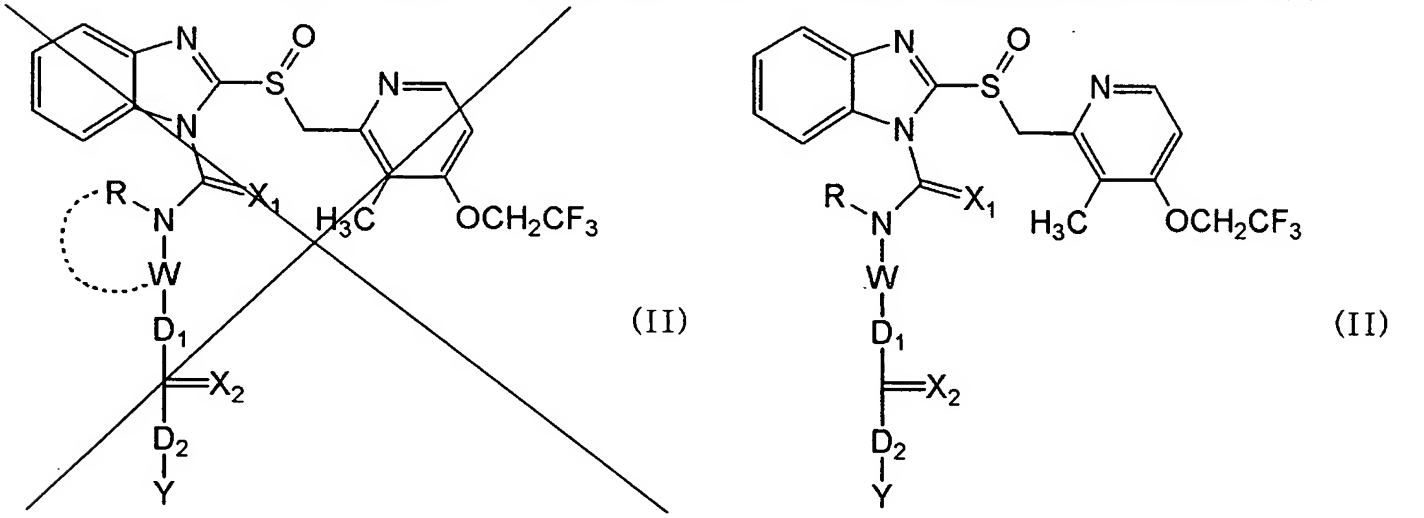
(4) tetrahydropyran,

or a salt thereof.

2. (Previously presented) The compound of claim 1, wherein Z is C_{6-14} arene.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) The compound of claim 1, which is represented by the formula (II):



(II)

wherein each symbol in the formula is as defined in claim 1.

5. (Previously Presented) The compound of claim 1, wherein X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom.

6. (Previously Presented) The compound of claim 1, wherein D_1 is an oxygen atom and D_2 is a bond or an oxygen atom.

7. (Previously Presented) The compound of claim 1, wherein W is a divalent chain C_{1-6} alkylene group optionally having substituents selected from C_{1-6} alkyl-carbonyloxy and ethoxycarbonyloxy.

8. (Original) The compound of claim 1, wherein W is an ethylene group.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) The compound of claim 1, wherein Y is a group selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from C_{1-6} alkoxy group, ethoxycarbonyloxy group, C_{6-14} aryl group and a group represented by $-NR^2R^3$ (wherein R^2 and R^3 are each C_{1-6} alkyl group),

(2) C_{3-10} cycloalkyl group, and

(3) C_{6-14} aryl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from (i) halogen atom and (ii) C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally having halogen atom(s).

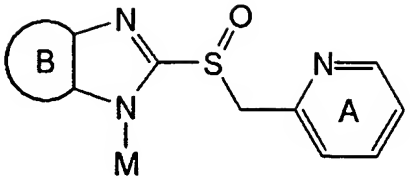
11. (Previously Presented) The compound of claim 1, wherein X_1 and X_2 are each an oxygen atom, D_1 is an oxygen atom and D_2 is a bond or an oxygen atom, W is an ethylene group, R is a C_{1-6} alkyl group, and Y is a group selected from (1) C_{1-6} alkyl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from C_{1-6} alkoxy group, ethoxycarbonyloxy group, C_{6-14} aryl group and a group represented by $-NR^2R^3$ (wherein R^2 and R^3 are each C_{1-6} alkyl group), (2) C_{3-10} cycloalkyl group, and (3) C_{6-14} aryl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from (i) halogen atom and (ii) C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally having halogen atom(s).

12. (Original) The compound of claim 1, which is a compound selected from
2-[methyl[[(R)-2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl acetate,
ethyl 2-[methyl[[(R)-2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl carbonate,
2-[methyl[[(R)-2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimida

zol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl tetrahydropyran-4-yl carbonate,
2-[methyl[[2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl tetrahydropyran-4-yl carbonate,
ethyl 2-[methyl[[2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl carbonate,
ethyl 2-[[[5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-3H-imidazo[4,5-b]pyridin-3-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate,
2-[[[5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-3H-imidazo[4,5-b]pyridin-3-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl acetate,
2-[methyl[[2-[[[3-methyl-4-(2,2,2-trifluoroethoxy)-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl]amino]ethyl acetate,
ethyl 2-[[[5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate,
ethyl 2-[[[(S)-5-methoxy-2-[[(4-methoxy-3,5-dimethyl-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate,
ethyl 2-[[[2-[[[4-(3-methoxypropoxy)-3-methyl-2-pyridyl]methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl carbonate, and
2-[[[5-(difluoromethoxy)-2-[[(3,4-dimethoxy-2-pyridyl)methyl]sulfinyl]-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]carbonyl](methyl)amino]ethyl ethyl carbonate,
or a salt thereof.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) A production method of a compound of claim 1, which comprises (1) condensing a compound represented by the formula (III):



(III)

wherein

ring A is a pyridine ring optionally having substituents selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group, and

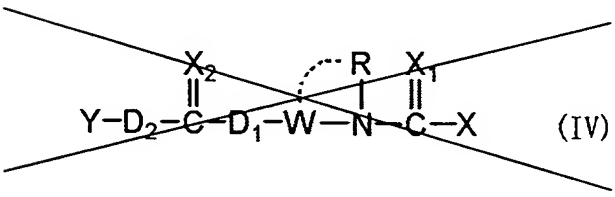
(2) C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally substituted by substituent(s) selected from halogen atom(s) and C_{1-6} alkoxy group,

ring B is a benzene ring optionally having substituents selected from

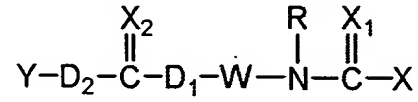
C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally having halogen atom(s), and

M is a hydrogen atom, a metal cation or a quaternary ammonium ion,

or a salt thereof, with a compound represented by the formula (IV):



(IV)



(IV)

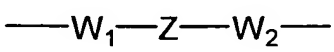
wherein

X is a leaving group,

X_1 and X_2

are each an oxygen atom or a sulfur atom,

W is C_{1-6} alkylene group optionally having substituents selected from C_{1-6} alkyl-carbonyloxy and ethoxycarbonyloxy, or a divalent group of the formula:



wherein W_1 and W_2 are each a C_{1-6} alkylene group or a bond, Z is C_{6-14} arene, an oxygen atom, SO_n wherein n is 0, 1 or 2, or >N-E wherein E is a hydrogen atom, a lower alkanoyl group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group, an aralkyloxycarbonyl group, a thiocarbamoyl group, a lower alkylsulfinyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a sulfamoyl group, a mono-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, a di-lower alkylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfamoyl group, an arylsulfinyl group, an arylsulfonyl group, an arylcarbonyl group or a carbamoyl group, and when Z is an oxygen atom, SO_n or >N-E, W_1 and W_2 are each C_{1-6} alkylene group,

R is a group selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group optionally substituted by C_{1-6} alkyl-carbonyloxy,

(2) C_{3-10} cycloalkyl group, and

(3) C_{6-14} aryl group optionally substituted by a group represented by $-CO-NR^2R^3$ (wherein R^2 and R^3 are each C_{1-6} alkyl group),

~~R and W~~

~~may be bonded to each other,~~

D_1 is an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom, or $>NR_1$,

D_2 is a bond, an oxygen atom, a sulfur atom, or $>NR_1$ wherein each R_1 is independently C_{1-6} alkyl group, and

Y is a group selected from

(1) C_{1-6} alkyl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from C_{1-6} alkoxy group, ethoxycarbonyloxy group, C_{6-14} aryl group and a group represented by $-NR^2R^3$ (wherein R^2 and R^3 are each C_{1-6} alkyl group),

(2) C_{3-10} cycloalkyl group,

(3) C_{6-14} aryl group optionally having substituent(s) selected from (i) halogen atom and (ii) C_{1-6} alkoxy group optionally having halogen atom(s), and

(4) tetrahydropyran, or

a salt thereof.

15. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of claim 1 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

16-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) A method for the treatment of peptic ulcer in an animal, which comprises administering an effective amount of a compound of claim 1 to the animal.

21-24. (Cancelled)